

## It's "all smiles" at SIU's SDM



On this week's episode of Segue, Southern Illinois University Edwardsville's premier radio show that discusses the lives and work of the people on campus and beyond, SIUE Chancellor Randy Pembroke interviews Bruce Rotter, DMD, professor and dean of the SIU School of Dental Medicine.

This episode of Segue will air at 9 a.m. on Sun-day, June 3, on WSIE 88.7 FM The Sound.

Rotter was born and raised in Granite City and attended SIUE as an undergraduate. He earned his doctor of dental medicine degree from the SIU School of Dental Medicine in 1982.

Following a four-year tour of duty as an Air Force Dental Officer, he earned his master's in oral and maxillofacial surgery from the University of Iowa. He began his academic career teaching oral surgery, implant dentistry and sedation at the SIU School of Dental Medicine in 1993.

The School accepted its first class in September 1972." Rotter said. "Dr. Frank Sobkowski was the founding dean of the School, and it began in Alton for two main reasons: Shurtleff College was available for use and Representative McPike, who represented Alton, was instrumental to bringing this school into existence."

"The current campus is a combination of historic buildings along with newly renovated space," Chancellor Pembroke mentions. . "We have state-of-the-art simulation labs where students learn and practice techniques."

Along with its updated facilities, practical learning environments and a central location in the heart of Alton, students are able to get involved in hands-on clinical programs with an affordable tuition rate

"Do you enjoy working with young people and helping them become better trained and do well in life?" Pembroke asks.

"Certainly! Teaching keeps you at the top of your game." Rotter replies.

"What we hope and see with our faculty here, while they're teaching or researching, those type of things keep them reflecting on the important issues in their field, and it helps them make their teaching even better," Pembroke says.

In terms of new developments for the SIU School of Dental Medicine, the School is thrilled to take part in one of Chancellor Pembroke's most cherished initiatives at SIUE: the service learning trips to Costa Rica. Rotter hopes to be able to send students to provide care in the country.

"It's important for our students to gain cultural competence. In our area, that cultural competence doesn't necessarily come every day," Rotter says. "They need to have an understanding of how other cultures live and the abject poverty they oftentimes work and live in.

"By partnering with the University of Costa Rica, we hope to be able to offer that lesson to our students while they're able to help the citizens of that country."

The School is preparing to graduate the six students of its inaugural International Advanced Placement Program during its June 2 ceremony.

The program is for students who have graduated from a dental program outside of the United States,” Rotter explains. “Although it gives them credentials to practice in their country, they are not allowed to practice in the U.S.

“At the SIU School of Dental Medicine, we have an accelerated bridge program where we bring those individuals into our program and allow them to be licensed in the United States.”

The SIU School of Dental Medicine recently transitioned to a Team-Based Clinical Program, which has increased mentorship opportunities and enhanced day-to-day operations.

“The new approach makes the entire outlook of our clinic more patient-friendly, student-friendly, and helps our students to be much more efficient in what they’re doing within the clinic,” Rotter says. The School is also spearheading new scholarship efforts to ensure deserving students can get more support as they enter the program. Additionally, facility improvement projects are underway for enhanced student learning and patient care.

“It’s been a busy last couple of years!” Rotter exclaims.

Faculty members at the SIU School of Dental Medicine are engaged in groundbreaking research.

“The teacher-scholar model that SIUE has used for a number of years is important for the dental school as well,” Rotter said. “Recently, some research that has been high on our list comes from Dr. Nathalia Garcia, who received a \$1.2 million NIH grant to study biomarkers for periodontal disease progression. We’ve been looking at oral disease as part of systemic diseases, and physicians are finally recognizing that this as a major part of overall health.

“Another member of our faculty, Dr. Rick Biethman, has conducted research in diabetes. He published a recent article, entitled ‘Screening for Diabetes in a Dental School Clinic to Assess Interprofessional Communication Between Physicians and Dental Students’.”

Rotter says the article goes beyond the study of the disease and examines how practitioners discuss diabetes with their colleagues and dental students, and how dental students discuss diabetes among their cohort and with their leading faculty members.

“I think those who have visited dentists recently know they look beyond our teeth for health concerns in the mouth and throat and are an important part of the overall health system treatment structure,” Pembroke says.

To hear Chancellor Pembroke and Dean Rotter’s conversation in its entirety, tune in at 9 a.m. on Sunday, June 3, to WSIE 88.7 FM The Sound.

*By Madelaine Gerard, SIUE Marketing & Communications*